

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, Senator Nichol, in the same way that Lincoln is 450 miles from Scottsbluff, Scottsbluff is 450 miles from Lincoln and you came in earlier to get a bill to resolve an issue related to school board members out in Scottsbluff and you asked for the state to intervene in that case. So those kind of arguments, whereas they are scintillating to the ear, have no validity as far as a bearing on the issue before us and that issue before us is representation, the right of people to speak with reference to how their children are to be educated. People like Senator Stoney have always had people on the school board in Omaha to be concerned about the welfare of his children, because if you drive through Omaha, since Senator Koch brought up the situation in Omaha, or in Senator Koch's area where they live, you can look at the school facilities and you can look at the people who are assigned to those schools as teachers. You can look at the educational credentials. You can look at the programs that are available out there. Then you go to the poor areas of the city and you see the neglected. You see that federal court after federal court has said that Omaha has engaged in deliberate segregation and discrimination against the students. You have seen law firms make money, money, money from the Omaha School District because certain people on the board wants to say that my children should not have the opportunity to go to school as the federal court has said. It amazes me that Senator Koch and Senator Stoney want to sit here and pretend that they don't know what happens in school districts where all areas of the city are not represented. They have got to know but they just must not care. But I do care and there are some matters so fundamental in their relationship to the operation of a democracy that they are not to be submitted to a referendum or a popularity contest. The U. S. Constitution is the basis for certain city councils throughout the country to be required to go to a district election method because the right to vote is considered fundamental in this country, and a vote means more than just putting an X on a piece of paper. A vote is a meaningful voice in the outcome of an election or the operation of a system that bears on the welfare of your children. The state has the responsibility to control the way the schools operate. That is a duty imposed by the Constitution of this state and that is the position the State Supreme Court has taken time after time after time. The schools are organized under the direction of the Legislature and the Legislature has the responsibility to act in these situations. Senator Koch, I am not going to draw all of the differences that exist between Omaha and Lincoln but I think you know very well what some of those differences are and you know very well that there are certain areas of Omaha which would never have been represented on the Omaha School Board because the patterns of voting down through the years have demonstrated that just as the patterns of voting in Lincoln have demonstrated that certain areas of this city are not to be represented on the school board. And Senator Maxey had a type of help which a lot of people in Lincoln would not receive in running for the school board. Her situation was unique. So we don't want a situation where such an important matter is involved to be left to whim and quirk. We want to establish a method of election at the school board level just like we do with reference to electing people to the State Legislature, but because the states could